

Planning Ahead



When facing the loss of your pet, you may feel overwhelmed about what is to come and find it difficult to make decisions about how you want to handle all the details.

Preparing in advance can be difficult, but can also be helpful, as well as comforting, knowing you can focus on your pet rather than details when the day arrives.

The first, and toughest question that everyone asks is how will I know when it's time? This article, [Is it time? Making the decision](#) can also be found on my website giftsofpeace.com.

Preparing Your Children

Often the loss of a pet is a child's first experience with death. The following article written by the Ohio Veterinary college covers a lot of the questions parents have about how to help their children through this difficult time. [Children and Pet Loss](#)



Location

I have helped families in many different locations. Choose a spot where you and your pet will be most relaxed and comfortable. You can hold your pet or sit beside him. You can settle with him on your sofa or bed, or he can be in his own bed in a favorite spot on the floor. You can also be outside on a blanket, or even at a favorite park.

Atmosphere

Would you like to have photos, candles, music playing? Have you written a letter to your pet, or do you have a favorite reading or scripture that you would like to read? Often children have drawings or letters that they have made for their pet (I encourage parents to make a copy to keep so the original can travel with the pet).

We welcome all religious/ spiritual practices or ceremonies, and are willing to help in any way we can.

Who would you like to have present?

- You may want to schedule so other family members can be present
- Out of town family members often join us via Skype and FaceTime
- Take care of yourself: It can be comforting to arrange support for yourself after the visit, especially if you are handling this alone.

Do you want your other pets to be present?



Although your other pets are often excited by the doctor's arrival , they usually settle down, and owners find their presence to be a comfort. They are an important part of what makes the home environment such a comforting place to say goodbye

It is important for them to see your pet once he has passed, but they do not have to be present for the entire visit if you find them disruptive.

Options for After Care

I offer communal and individual cremation, and can take your pet with me at the end of the visit and handle the arrangements if you would like.

If you choose individual cremation you will receive your pet's ashes back. Ashes can be hand delivered to your veterinarian's office, sent to you Fedex for a small charge, or you may pick them up at the cremation company.

You may decide on communal cremation. The ashes are not returned but are scattered by the cremation company off the coast of Santa Monica.

Memorial Options

- The cremation company offers clay paw prints for an additional fee. These can be chosen with either the individual or communal cremation option.
- You can make your own paw print ahead of time using kits from online sources or local craft stores.
- Several companies online offer glass memory beads .Your pet's ashes are incorporated into the beads to make a pendant or bracelet.
- Your cremation company offers many urn choices. We can leave information with you after the visit should you decide you would like a different option.
- Consider a portrait or photography session. There are many local artists who offer this service.

Final Details:

- If you choose, we can notify your veterinarian's office of our visit. We will check with you at the visit about your preference.
- You may send a favorite small blanket or toys, pictures, letters, or flowers with your pet to be cremated with them.
- We can mail or email you a receipt for your insurance company- most companies will cover part of the visit.
- You do not need any proof of euthanasia for your pet's license renewal- simply mark the appropriate box when your renewal is next sent.
- Check with your veterinarian or a local rescue group to see if they have a need for unused medications. Supplies such as beds, carriers and bowls can be donated to your local shelter- most are happy to have food, even if it has been opened.